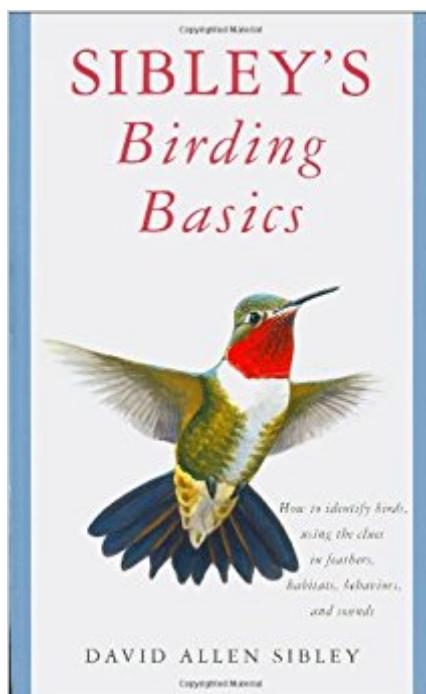


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# Sibley's Birding Basics: How To Identify Birds, Using The Clues In Feathers, Habitats, Behaviors, And Sounds



## Synopsis

From the renowned author of the New York Times' best seller, *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, a comprehensive, beautifully illustrated guide to identifying birds in the field--an essential companion for birders of all skill and experience levels. *The Sibley Guide to Birds* and *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* are both universally acclaimed as the new standard source of species information. And now David Sibley, America's premier birder and best-known bird artist, turns his attention to the general characteristics that influence the appearance of all birds, unlocking the clues to their identity. In 200 beautifully rendered illustrations and 16 essays, this scientifically precise volume distills the essence of Sibley's own experience and skills, providing a solid introduction to naming the birds. *Birding Basics* reviews how one can get started as a birder--the equipment necessary, where and when to go birding, and perhaps most important, the essential things to look for when birds appear in the field--as well as the basic concepts of bird identification and the variations that can change the appearance of a bird over time or in different settings. Sibley also provides critical information on the aspects of avian life that differ from species to species: feathers (color, arrangement, shape, molt), behavior and habitat, and sounds. With Sibley as your guide, when you learn how to interpret what the feathers, the anatomical structure, the sounds of a bird tell you--when you know the clues that show you why there's no such thing as "just a duck"--birding will be more fun, and more meaningful. An essential addition to the Sibley shelf!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

While Sibley's (The Sibley Guide to Birds) book is a field guide primer, it provides useful information for not only novice bird watchers, but also for veterans hoping to expand their life lists. This compact handy volume is an ideal complement to the author's two massive works on bird identification and behavior. Beginning with his trained artist's eye, Sibley advises readers on how to develop techniques in sighting birds by honing their ability to see details. Sibley also provides information on where, when and how to find and observe birds in the wild, ranging from the obvious, being quiet and moving slowly, to the more esoteric, anticipating birds' needs and keeping field notes. One of the most difficult tasks for bird watchers is differentiating between subspecies with very similar physical appearances. With this in mind, the writer provides suggestions for sketching birds in the field with special emphasis on comparative details, which will enable the birder to make a positive identification later. There's a bounty of information about feathers shapes, colors, sizes and functions, all discussed in accessible language. The book's illustrated entries range from common birds to the most rare. With its analysis of weather, gear, geography and seasons, Sibley's book will enable birders of all skill and experience levels to improve their abilities and enhance the satisfaction of their birding treks. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Extraordinary artist and naturalist Sibley follows his highly acclaimed The Sibley Guide to Birds and The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior with this excellent and attractive guide to birding basics. In 16 thoughtful, concise essays accompanied by 200 paintings, mostly new for this book, he explores general aspects of birding such as getting started, misidentification, voice, understanding feathers, age variation, ethics and conservation, taxonomy, and finding birds. If being a field naturalist is a craft, then this book is essential in helping to develop and understand the required skills. This little gem is worth the modest price for the paintings, or the text, alone. Highly recommended-Henry T. Armistead, Free Lib. of Philadelphia Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

At 154 pages I have always been fascinated that an author could pack so much information into so few pages. I have had a lifelong interest in birds - as a wee lad I was extremely aware of them and found each and everyone of them I spotted (I did not know the names of most) interesting and delightful. I began "serious" birding later in life than some in the late 1960s. Birding has become one of my life passions; but that being said, I must assure you that I am NOT an expert! No, no, no! Far from it as a matter of fact. Each passing year I learn more and more and discover that much I

thought I knew I actually did not know...or at least did not know it well enough. Enter this book; "Sibley's Birding Basics." I purchased my first copy around 2005, a couple of years after it was first published. I read it and reread it and read it again...and on and on. Each time I went through the book I grumbled under my breath (I still do as a matter of fact), that I wished I had had this book and the information in it right from the beginning. My life would have been much richer had I had access to the information found in this thing. Now this brings us to the only quibble I have concerning what is probably the best of all the Sibley books (I have all of them) and that would be the title. By using in the title the word "Basics" it gives the potential reader that this is a book meant for the beginning birder and only the beginning birder. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Yes, it is a most wonderful book for the novice, not doubt about that, but it is also of extreme value to the most experienced of birders. The book is organized in chapters which include: Getting Started, Finding Birds, The Challenges of Bird Identification, Misidentification, Identifying Rare Birds, Taxonomy, Using Behavioral Clues, Voice, Understanding Feathers, Feather Arrangement and Color Patterns, Structure of Tail and Wings, Bare Parts, Molt, Feather Wear, Age Variation and Ethics and Conservation. The illustrations in this work are absolutely the best. The text is clear and concise and extremely readable in informative and the illustrations and text blend perfectly. As the author writes, he shows you what he is writing about. I dread the day (I say with tongue in cheek and somewhat sarcastically) when I become one of those folks I meet now and then that simply know everything about birds and bird identification there is to know and are quick to tell you about it. One of the nicest things about birding is that there is always something to learn and indeed, to relearn from time to time. I am rather convinced that this little book is of great value to both the rank beginner and to the birder who has been beating the bushes for decades. Due to being rather absent minded and quite disorganized (Long story which I will not bore you with), I recent "misplaced" my original copy of this book, ergo I was forced to buy this new one. Now, If I can just learn to distinguish and identify all the warbles and sparrows that flit though my life I will die a happy guy...sigh. Rotten little LBJs! Don Blankenship The Ozarks

This book was absolutely critical to my education and development as a birder. I read it right when I was starting out and it fully prepared me for what to expect out in the field. Going out for the first time, I didn't feel overwhelmed when I spotted something I didn't recognize. I felt like I knew where to look, how to look, and what to look for to make the accurate identification. Obviously every birder needs substantial time in the field before they really know what they're doing, but this book really helps you know where to start. Even after more experience, I still find myself going back to it on a

regular basis for a refresher - it's just that good. It's easy to read, straight forward, and filled with tons of helpful information. I think it's a must have for birders of every skill level.\*\*Specifically for the Kindle edition: All the illustrations and diagrams are clear, well-sized, and easy to read on the Kindle. The only downside is you can't see the color in the illustrations since Kindle's are only black and white - BUT you can download the Kindle app for your computer and see the illustrations in full-color there.

There are already several excellent reviews of this book, so why add another? To add another perspective. Several of the strong reviews are from people who have clearly been avid bird watchers for years. I am not in that category. I watched birds a lot as a child (Eagle Boy Scout and all that), but as my professional life developed, I didn't have the time to seriously observe birds. So I wanted to add that for the causal bird watcher who wants to get more serious, this book is amazing, incredible, wonderful, remarkable, astounding - I teach my students not to go on with adjectives - but I can't help it. I have learned so much reading this book. The hints and insights that Shibley has assembled in this guide are a treasure. The methods he lays out for more accurate identifications are wonderful. My bird watching has improved immensely because of this guide. I thought it would only help me be more accurate in my identifications, but it has increased the pleasure of bird watching for me so much. I am truly amazed. For the causal bird watcher, this small, easy-to-read volume is a must. Do yourself a favor and put this in your cart now. You will be glad you did.

This would be an excellent guide for a somewhat experienced birder. It explains what features to look and listen for, when deciding what bird you are looking at. I am new to birding, and most of this book is above my level of skill. I will return to it when I have spent more time in the field with birders who can help get me started.

This is required reading for my Field Ornithology class. I have been birding for over 20 years but I am learning great tips from this book, can't believe I haven't come across it before. I am noticing things that I never thought to look or listen for. This will improve your birding, buy it.

Arrived as described and on time.

Great help organizing the basics for a birdwatching course. Students loved it. So helpful for everyone.

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